

REMARKS

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

The office action and prior art again relied upon have been carefully considered. In an effort to expedite the prosecution of the present application, previous independent claim 4 has been cancelled and in its stead, comprehensive claim 7 is being submitted for the Examiner's consideration. Applicant believes that newly added claim 7 addresses the issues raised by the Examiner.

On page 2 of the office action, an objection was made to the specification and claims 4-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. The Examiner questioned the sufficiency of disclosure regarding washing and unclogging phases. As recognized by the Examiner, the use of both phases is indicated on page 3, lines 12 and 13 of the specification. It is well known in the prior art that typically, a number of washing phases takes place, as described in the specification on page 3, lines 25 and 26. Typically, an unclogging phase does not take place unless the washing phases prove insufficient.

Nevertheless, newly added independent claim 7 simply addresses the essential washing phases.

At the bottom of page 2 of the office action, the Examiner points out that a solid/liquid separator was not included in the previously submitted claims. As will be noted, such a device is specifically stated in newly added independent claim 7.

The separator is shown in Fig. 2 of the drawings in the form of a hydrocyclone. The hydrocyclone receives wash water provided by reactor 2. The sludge leaving part 6 of the solid/liquid separator is sent to the reactor 8.

Now that the solid/liquid separator has been specifically defined in the claim, the prior art previously cited is believed to be overcome.

According to the cited Japanese references '994 and '781, the treatment water is sent to the solid/liquid separator. However, in accordance with the present invention, only the wash water from reactor 2 is sent to the solid/liquid separator.

By virtue of the foregoing remarks, Applicants have overcome the objection to the specification, rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as well as the previous rejection of the claims on the basis of prior art.

In view of the above, consideration and allowance are, therefore, respectfully solicited.

In the event the Examiner believes an interview might serve to advance the prosecution of this application in any way, the undersigned attorney is available at the telephone number noted below.

The Director is hereby authorized to charge any fees, or credit any overpayment, associated with this communication, including any extension fees, to CBLH Deposit Account No. 22-0185, under Order No. 21029-00287-US1 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: February 16, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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